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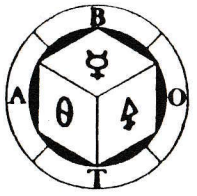
TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

LESSON NO. 46



BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Forty-six

THE WORLD

The title of Key 21, THE WORLD, suggests "world-consciousness". When you attain to this you find yourself in tune with the whole universe. You discover that the center of life and power at the heart of your personal life is one with the Power which rules creation.

In this consciousness, the whole universe is realized as the body of the I AM. When you experience this, you will know that the directive Center of the entire field of cosmic activity is identical with your innermost SELF.

The four corners of the Key are occupied by the same mystical figures which appear on Key 10. Here there is a difference in one detail. In Key 21 the face of the bull is turned away from the lion and also away from the central figure of the design. This is intentional and follows an ancient tradition observed in most early versions of the Tarot symbolism.

The bull represents the element of earth, or that which gives form. In Key 10 this is turned toward the lion and also toward the center of the Key where the symbol of Spirit is shown at the heart of the wheel. This is because the mental activity pictured in Key 10 is one which turns the mind away from form to the consideration of energy, away from body to the consideration of Spirit. The comprehension of the Law of Cycles (Key 10) is an act of mental abstraction in which attention is turned away from the forms of things to their fiery essence (the lion).

In Key 21, on the contrary, the emphasis is upon concrete manifestation. This Key is attributed to the planet Saturn representing cosmic forces which limit energy in producing form. In this Key, therefore, the bull faces away from the lion, and away from the center of design, in order to indicate that the forces pictured by the World move toward concrete manifestation.

The goal of the Great Work is not abstraction. It is demonstration, expression, orderly procession of energy into suitable forms—the adornment of the Life-power with suitable garments.

For the other meanings of the four figures at the corners of Key 21 see the explanations in Lesson 23. Remember that these creatures represent the Great Name, יהוה, therefore the general significance of their positions at the corners of the Key suggest that all manifestation is included within the boundaries of this Name and partakes of the Reality for which it stands.

The wreath is an ellipsoid figure. Its longer axis is exactly eight units, and its shorter one exactly five units. Thus a rectangle which would exactly contain it would be eight units high and five units wide.

The rectangle of 5 x 8 is mentioned in the first of the Rosicrucian manifestoes, "Fama Fraternitatis", which speaks of a vault of seven sides and seven corners, every side "five foot broad and the height of eight foot". Note that the area of such a rectangle is 40 square units, and that 40 is the number of the letter Mem, the letter corresponding to the Hanged man, Key 12.

The total length of the four boundary lines of such a rectangle is 26 units, the number of the Great Name יהוה. Furthermore, 5 is to 8 in very close approximation to the Golden Section, or Extreme and Mean Proportion, and these two numbers were used again and again by the ancients to express that proportion which is related also to the fifth and the octave in music.

Extreme and Mean Proportion may be thus defined: "That proportion in which the lesser part is to the greater part as is the greater part to the whole." It is paraphrased in the occult maxim: "Nature (the lesser part) is to Man (the greater part) as is Man to God (the whole)."

To students of dynamic symmetry, the 5 x 8 rectangle is known as the Rectangle of the Whirling Square. It is the basis of the logarithmic spiral, concerning which Claude Bragdon says:

"Now the generic or archetypal form of everything in the universe is naturally not other than the form of the universe itself. Our stellar universe is now thought by astronomers to be a spiral nebula; and the spiral nebulae we see in the heavens are stellar systems like our own. The geometric equivalent of the nebula form is the logarithmic spiral. This is therefore the unit form of the universe, the form of all forms."

Thus the wreath represents the Great Name, יהוה, as the fundamental principle of form of which the entire cosmos is the representation or manifestation.

The wreath is composed of twenty-two triads of leaves. Every triad corresponds to a Hebrew letter, to one of the twenty-two aspects of conscious energy represented by those letters, and to one of the twenty-two Tarot Keys. Every mode of the Life-power has three kinds of expression: 1. Integrative; 2. Disintegrative; 3. Equilibrating. The third balances the other two.

Note that a wreath is a work of man. Nature provides the leaves. Man weaves them into a chaplet for the victor. Thus the wreath is a symbol for human adaptation of the forces of nature. It suggests also that cosmic consciousness is not spontaneously provided for by natural evolution. It is the completion of the Great Work and man is the artificer.

At top and bottom the wreath is fastened with bands similar to the horizontal figure 8 over the head of the Magician. All that is visible of these bands is that portion which makes a form of

the letter x. This is the shape of one of the ancient Hebrew characters for the letter Tav. It intimates that the power represented by Tav is what man uses to bind the forces of nature into a wreath of victory. It is also a hint that the X form is more accurately shown as the horizontal 8, figure of mathematical infinity, and symbol of the truth that opposite effects are produced by identical causes.

The wreath rests upon the bull and the lion because man's power of giving form (the bull) to the formless, fiery, essential energy (the lion) is what enables him to weave together the twenty-two modes of force derived from that one energy.

Finally, the outline of the wreath is a zero sign. The ellipse of manifestation, woven by man from the forces which play through him, is No-Thing. It has just as much power over him as he gives it and not one whit more. It does not really bind him when he understands what it is. The "world" of a master of life is a wreath of victory.

The dancer in the wreath appears to be feminine, but has been so drawn that the legs are more masculine than womanly. This is to show that the World Dancer is the Celestial Androgyne.

Her purple veil (in our version, as in ancient Tarot Keys) is in the form of a letter Kaph. Because Kaph in Tarot is represented by Key 10, the meaning here is this:

The mechanistic appearance assumed by natural phenomena (Kaph, the Wheel of Fortune) veils their true character. The cosmos seems to be a system of wheels within wheels. It presents itself to our rational consciousness as a vast machine. Cause and effect seem to be rigidly and unalterably connected.

This is only relatively true. The Life-power is the author, and therefore the master, of the Law of Cause and Consequence. All "laws" are part and parcel of the drama of manifestation. **No law binds the SELF.**

The World Dancer is perfectly free and this state of freedom is NOW. Hence the Dancer stands on nothing. She is self-supported. She herself is in perfect equilibrium.

A spiral in her right hand turns toward the right. One in her left hand turns toward the left. These spirals represent integration and disintegration. They are complements and they turn simultaneously.

In the picture, each spiral has a definite beginning and a definite end, but this is simply a limitation due to the impossibility of picturing the infinite. Understand, the process the spirals symbolize has neither beginning nor end. Each spiral has exactly eleven loops, so that the two together represent the twenty-two modes of conscious energy symbolized by the Hebrew letters and Tarot Keys.

He who enters into cosmic consciousness experiences directly what is symbolized by this Key. He knows that every particle of the manifested universe is a living center of One Reality,

within that One Reality. He perceives directly that whatever is being disintegrated is balanced exactly by that which is simultaneously being integrated. He knows that the universe is one of conscious motion consisting of endless sequences of production. Evolution is balanced by devolution, association by disassociation, integration by disintegration.

Says The Book of Concealed Mystery, an old Qabalistic work: "Before there was equilibrium, countenance beheld not countenance. This equilibrium hangeth in that region which is NOT." Compare this with what is said of the Place called "That-which-is-not" in the Clementine Homilies, quoted in Lesson 45.

This region which is NOT is the central point in the Cube of Space, where the three co-ordinates and the four interior diagonals cross. It is the point of perfect balances through which pass the thirteen axes of symmetry of the cube. At this point our occult attribution of the letters places the generating center of the three co-ordinates. That is to say, the three Mother letters, Aleph, Mem and Shin, are all located at this center and the co-ordinate lines corresponding to these letters radiate from this center. At this center, also, is placed the letter Tav, the Temple of Holiness in the midst. Final Mem is also located here. From these letters we may form the two words, Emeth, אמת and Shem, שם. Fundamentally, Emeth means stability, hence truth. Shem signifies sign, token, memorial, monument, name. It is used often in Qabalistic writings to designate the special Divine Name, Jehovah, יהוה. Thus the letters assigned to the central point of the cube signify "The Truth of THAT which was, is and will be."

The same truth is the central reality at the core of human personality. Therefore is the Name of God declared by Moses to be I AM. For the same reason, Hindu philosophers term this reality the Supreme SELF.

The point where it is centered is, however, without form or dimensions. Hence it is the region which is NOT. Here is the same suggestion which Qabalah gives us when it calls Ain, אין, the No-Thing, the "First Veil of the Absolute". It is what Tarot means by numbering the Fool, symbol of the Spirit which manifests the whole creation, with the zero sign. No conditions of time, space, or quality limit the perfect freedom of the Central Reality. At this center is the focus of all possibilities, conceivable and inconceivable, known and unknown.

Walt Whitman emphasizes the idea of equilibrium also, for he tells us that cosmic consciousness is an "intuition of the absolute balance, in time and space, of the whole of this multifariousness, this revel of fools, and incredible make-believe and general unsettledness we call the **world**; a soul sight of that divine clue and unseen thread which holds the whole congeries of things, all history and time, and all events, however trivial, however momentous, like a leashed dog in the hand of a hunter."

Leashed, but ready to be let loose to fulfil the hunter's bidding! When the SELF is known, it is known as the Master of the Show of Illusion named "The World". The name of this Master, in Hebrew, is, אהיה Eheyeh, or I AM, and this is the Supreme Divine Name

attributed to Kether, the Crown of Primal Will. It is connected with this final Tarot Key because its number, like that of the Key, is 21.

What we wish most to leave with you in closing this lesson and this course is the realization that states of consciousness are states of power. The goal of the Great Work is **identification** with the Central Reality of the universe, and such knowledge is really the acme of practical power.

Thus, in alchemical books, this knowledge is symbolized by the Philosophers' Stone—that is to say, the mineral kingdom as the truly wise perceive it. For the mineral kingdom is the basis of all form-manifestation throughout the universe, and to see that kingdom as it really is, is to understand all else. Hence the alchemists assure us that whoever knows the First Matter knows all that is necessary, because, as Philaethes put it, in his Fount of Chemical Truth, "Our appliances are part of our substance." Here is the secret, in plain sight.

In the consciousness of one who has reached this goal, Father and Son have become one and rule from the throne at the center of the ALL. This is the secret meaning of Ehben, אבן, the STONE, as we have told you before. Therefore is it written that they who possess this STONE have the means for preserving their youth, expelling disease, preventing suffering, and providing themselves with all they require. All this is exactly and actually true without any metaphor whatever. Success in the Great Work so unites the personal self with the ONE IDENTITY that every detail of the personal existence is a conscious expression of the ALL POWER.

A life so lived is a life of perfect freedom, perfect health, perfect joy. It is a life in which there is no trace of want or insufficiency. It is a life in which every circumstance of daily experience affords an opportunity for the demonstration of what is termed, in connection with the letter Tav, the Administrative Intelligence.

Make this your goal. Devote yourself with all your heart to it, and, like thousands who have gone this way before you, you shall be among those who tread the joyous measures of the Dance of Life.

The next lesson is a Supplement to this course. Be sure to follow the instruction therein, with full attention to all details. It is your work for the next month.